

**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING OF AUGUST 26, 2014**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairman Clements called the Tuesday, August 26, 2014, meeting to order at 6:37 p.m. in the Town Council Room, Rocky Hill Town Hall, 761 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill, Connecticut.

Present: Dimple Desai, Chairman (arrived at 6:54 p.m.)
Kevin Clements, Vice Chairman
Victor Zarrilli, Secretary
Carmen D'Agostino
Giuseppe Aglieco

Alternates: William O'Sullivan
Michael Casasanta

Also: Kimberley A. Ricci, Dir. Planning & Building/Asst. ZEO
Eileen A. Knapp, Recording Secretary

2. Review Town Council Resolution and set possible public hearing date for the following:

WHEREAS, the Town Planning & Zoning Regulations have been interpreted to allow multi-family housing as a mixed use in certain business zones; and

WHEREAS, this interpretation has been controversial in some respects and may lead to unintended consequences; and

WHEREAS, there are currently hearings being conducted regarding an updated Plan of Conservation and Development for the Town;

NOW, THEREFORE, it is moved that the Town Council respectfully requests that the Town of Rocky Hill Planning & Zoning Commission consider the adoption of a moratorium on all new multi-family development in excess of two family dwellings until said Plan of Conservation and Development is updated and/or there is a comprehensive review of the Town's Zoning Regulations as they apply to multi-family development, and that the Clerk of the Council forward a copy of this motion to the Planning & Zoning Commission for its consideration.

Vice Chairman Clements served as Acting Chairman until the arrival of Dimple Desai.

Ms. Ricci said this was added to the Town Council's Agenda on August 18th. This Resolution was prepared by the Town Attorney. The interpretation of the Regulations is that multi-family housing would be a component of a mixed-use (commercial and residential). She said she is

unclear what is meant in by the phrase “unintended consequences”, as it is a very broad statement.

Acting Chair Clements said he would rather see this issue addressed at a Regular meeting, not a Special Meeting. Most of the Commission agreed that it would be best to set a public hearing to discuss this matter. Commissioner Casasanta said he did not feel a public hearing on this issue is necessary. Commissioner O’Sullivan said he would like property owner’s most directly affected by this Resolution to be notified of the public hearing. He suggested getting feedback from the Town Attorney on what notice is necessary.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Zarrilli to set a public hearing including all staff comments and input from the Town Attorney on September 17, 2014 at 6:30, following the previously scheduled public hearings to consider the following Resolution:

WHEREAS, the Town Planning & Zoning Regulations have been interpreted to allow multi-family housing as a mixed use in certain business zones; and

WHEREAS, this interpretation has been controversial in some respects and may lead to unintended consequences; and

WHEREAS, there are currently hearings being conducted regarding an updated Plan of Conservation and Development for the Town;

NOW, THEREFORE, it is moved that the Town Council respectfully requests that the Town of Rocky Hill Planning & Zoning Commission consider the adoption of a moratorium on all new multi-family development in excess of two family dwellings until said Plan of Conservation and Development is updated and/or there is a comprehensive review of the Town's Zoning Regulations as they apply to multi-family development, and that the Clerk of the Council forward a copy of this motion to the Planning & Zoning Commission for its consideration.

Seconded by Commissioner D’Agostino.

A FRIENDLY AMENDMENT was made by Commissioner Zarrilli to change the date of the public hearing to October 1, 2014. Seconded by Commissioner Aglieco. FRIENDLY AMENDMENT ACCEPTED.

**ALL WERE IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION, MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
(Commissioner Casasanta voted in the absence of Chairman Desai)**

3. MEETING FACILITATOR - Glenn Chalder, Planimetrics

a. Review – Planning Primer

Mr. Glenn Chalder introduced himself. He said the next major milestone in the POCD is the public informational meeting, which will be held September 23, 2014. He said he will be handing out booklets to the Commission as a way to assemble information for the planning process and he is hoping these booklets will be posted on the Town's website so the public can follow along also. Mr. Chalder said he will also be sending the Commission their information electronically throughout this process.

(Chairman Desai arrives and takes his seat at the table.)

The first booklet he handed out is called the Planning Primer. This is a summary of Planning and explains why a community plans and the planning process.

b. Review – Conditions and Trends

The second booklet is on Conditions and Trends, which sets the stage on the planning process. This is a list of current trends affecting the Community and is something the Commission should be thinking about. The booklet also includes the history of trends that have brought Rocky Hill where it is today. Rocky Hill serves two roles within the region, the first being as a residential community and the second as a major employment center. Future growth, both residential and commercial, can be expected to occur in Rocky Hill. The role of the POCD is to figure out how they want to accept this future growth.

The population of Rocky Hill is also expected to grow as more land is developed. Rocky Hill attracts young couples, who are looking for starter housing opportunities. Mr. Chalder said there is a change occurring in the age composition of the population as a whole. The Baby Boomers are currently the largest age group and will soon be moving into the age group of 60+. These aging Baby Boomers should be forefront in the Commissioner's minds as far as considering their societal needs. Mr. Chalder went over the breakdown of age groups in Rocky Hill.

The next topic of discussion was the housing stock in Rocky Hill. There are almost 9,000 housing units in town but the growth rate is slowing. Rocky Hill's multifamily housing is higher than the State's average percentage. A town's housing diversity can affect who moves to the Town.

Commissioner O'Sullivan asked about the correlation between multi-family housing and its impact on the school population. Mr. Chalder said there is research that examines the implication of multi-family housing on a community and he said, generally speaking, school enrollment impact for multi-family housing is actually substantially less than single family housing. He said it isn't that hard to determine the number of school children that live in multi-family housing units in Rocky Hill. The Commission agreed that they would like to get this information.

As far as economic conditions in town, the number of jobs in town is increasing and Rocky Hill has a very strong tax base. Also included in the pamphlet are a preliminary land use map, and a zoning map. Mr. Chalder said he expects growth to continue and the age composition is also

changing. This will change the demand for local services. Rocky Hill seems to attract households that have a positive fiscal impact on a community. The next step in this process is the Public Informational Meeting

c. Interview Suggestions

Commissioners received cards to suggest people Mr. Chalder may want to consider interviewing. These interviews will be conducted in the next few weeks.

d. Questionnaires (Department Heads / Boards and Commissions)

Mr. Chalder will be working with Mrs. Ricci to develop questionnaires for Department Heads and Board and Commission members.

e. Public Workshop Meeting

The Public Workshop Meeting is scheduled for September 23rd in the cafeteria of Griswold Middle School. Publicity materials are being prepared including posters, e-mail, slides for the public access channel, and an official press release. Commissioner Zarrilli suggested enlisting the help of the Rocky Hill Chamber of Commerce. This meeting is designed to engage the public to gather information from them.

f. Photo Contest

This was suggested at the last meeting and Mr. Chalder put together some information of how to move forward with it. He suggested having prizes awarded to those people who submitted pictures that are used in the POCD.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS on the Plan of Conservation and Development Update

Ms. Krista Mariner of 58 Farms Village Road addressed the Commission. She asked if the booklets and any other information being used in the POCD update could be posted on line so the public can have access to it. She asked if Mr. Chalder would attend the public hearing on October 1st regarding the proposed Multi-family Housing Resolution. She is disappointed that a telephone survey is not part of the process and suggested doing a questionnaire instead. Mrs. Ricci said in July she has requested that the IT Department create a prominent link from the Town's website to a page on the POCD update and that has not been done. She said she will talk to the Acting Town Manager about this issue.

Ms. Jacqueline Farnham of 95 West Street said they are seeing unprecedented population growth right now and the question is, will Rocky Hill become "urbanized". They need to decide how many people they want in Town and how much the Town can provide in terms of services to its residents. She asked the Commission to consider adding verbiage to protect all its current holdings of conservation lands and parks in perpetuity as was done at the State level. She is also in favor of a town wide linear park and trail system.

Mr. Ed Chiucarello of 40 Riverview Road agreed with comments made by Ms. Mariner. He suggested using the overhead screen so the public can follow along with the pamphlets that are being discussed. He has also been frustrated with the lack of response regarding updating the Town's website. Mr. Chiucarello suggested using the "robo-call" system to contact residents. Mrs. Ricci said she would talk to the Town Manager about that.

Ms. Sandra Kelly of 28 Tollgate Road addressed the Commission. She said they not only have to look at why people come to Rocky Hill, but also at why people stay here. She is concerned about the amount of development taking place in Rocky Hill and feels it needs to stop so they can protect the open space they still have.

Mr. Christopher Duff of Brookwood Village said he agrees with the comments about using the overhead screen. He suggested utilizing the Rocky Hill Life paper and the Town's Face book page to get the message out. He said many times they evaluate development on an individual basis and he is hoping by updating this POCD they will be better able to integrate the development and link the projects together. He would like to see the Town find ways to connect and grow as a community so people stay in Rocky Hill.

Ms. Pat Hughes-Walworth of 94 Highview Drive and Owner/Broker of Hughes Realty said she agrees with all the public comments and she feels there is a need for affordable housing and asked that the Commission takes into account the senior population.

Commissioner Zarrilli asked if the Commission could get a map of the current open space in Rocky Hill. Mr. Chalder said they would be using the GIS system to get that information and categorize it. He pointed out that the budget for this project is about half of what it was when they updated the POCD 15 years ago, so they will be doing the best job they can with the resources they have.

Chairman Desai said he has many concerns including traffic, especially on Route 3 & Route 99, sidewalks, protection of key assets, assessing the needs and problems in Town, parking and pedestrian safety. He stressed the importance of marketing the POCD update to get the most public input possible. Chairman Desai suggested getting input from the Chamber of Commerce.

Commissioner Zarrilli asked how they conduct phone surveys and asked if they could consider using an on-line survey website. Mr. Chalder said they use a firm for the telephone surveys and the more surveys they conduct, the more accurate the information is. Mr. Chalder said with the telephone survey, the results are randomly selected but with on-line surveys people are self-selected. Right now they do not have a survey included in the budget for this update. Commissioner Zarrilli suggested that all Commissions make an announcement at the beginning of their meetings notifying the public about the meetings being held on the POCD and also sending notices home with school age children.

There was a suggestion from someone in the public about posting the notice on the electronic signs that are around town.

5. ADJOURN

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Casasanta to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Zarrilli. All were in favor, MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen A. Knapp
Recording Secretary